

Better Homes and Centers



**Department of Consumer
and Industry Services**

**Child Care:
Finding the Best Fit**

Issue 43

SPRING 1997

Dear Reader,

This publication shares with the child care community, parents, and other interested persons, topical information regarding young children who are cared for in licensed child care settings.

We encourage child care providers to make this publication available to the parents of the children in care or to provide them with the Web address so they may receive their own copy.

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**We dedicate this issue of Better Homes and Centers
to our colleague Pat Ruby**

IN MEMORY OF PAT RUBY

On October 25, 1996, Michigan's children lost a friend. Day care licensing consultant Pat Ruby died unexpectedly after a scheduled surgery. Pat had worked for the state for over 24 years. She spent many years licensing children's foster homes in Washtenaw County. She spent the last 4 ½ years licensing day care homes and centers.

Pat was a tireless advocate for children. She worked with her licensed facilities to help them provide the kind of care children want and deserve. Pat cared deeply about children and the adults who care for them.

Pat left a husband and three daughters who are struggling to understand why she isn't here. We, as her work family, are struggling, too. Pat was an awful lot of fun. We so enjoyed working with her. She was the spark that lit this office and our light is burning much dimmer these days.

In loving memory from her colleagues



Vision Statement

Michigan's children, in regulated child care programs will have safe, healthy and developmentally appropriate environments as a result of Michigan's Child Day Care Licensing program being successful and innovative.

Mission Statement

The Division of Child Day Care Licensing is committed to:

1. Providing for the protection of children in child care through licensing, regulation, and technical assistance.
2. Promoting the improvement of the health, safety, and development of children in child care through licensing, consultation, and education.
3. Empowering providers, parents, and the community to work in partnership with the Division of Child Day Licensing in the continuous effort to improve child care for Michigan's children.
4. Fulfilling licensing responsibilities in a professional, competent, fair, and courteous manner.
5. Working with the business community to ensure the development of good child care services.

We, in this Division, appreciate the hard work and dedication of licensed/registered providers in support of quality child care. Michigan's national recognition for its child care program could not exist without you and your staff's commitment to provide safe and healthy environments for Michigan's most vulnerable population.

Thank you!

Ted deWolf, Director
Child Day Care Licensing Division

DIRECTOR'S CORNER

From time to time it is important for an agency like ours to review our mandate and how we should carry it out. In so doing, Child Day Care Licensing staff joined together in developing a vision and mission statement that I want to share with all of you.

The Division's vision and mission statement follows the legislative mandate, "to provide for the protection of children through the licensing and regulation of child care organizations." A child care organization is defined as "having as its principle function the receiving of minor children for care, maintenance, training and supervision. . ."

Our commitment to quality child care begins with this parable:

Once upon a time, there was a town whose playground was at the edge of the cliff. Every so often a child would fall off the cliff. Finally, the town council decided that something should be done about the serious injuries to children. After much discussion, however, the council was deadlocked. Some council members wanted to put a fence on the top of the cliff, but others wanted to put an ambulance at the bottom.

Waiting for children to be injured and only then providing them with help is cruel and inhumane when the damage can be prevented.

FOR PROVIDERS AND PARENTS ALIKE: FIRST IMPRESSIONS COUNT

Editorial Staff

A prospective client is walking up your drive. Her first impressions of your day care home will influence her decision to place her child or go somewhere else.

Take a walk from the street to your home, then go through each room. Use all your senses to simulate a parent's experience. Then ask yourself, "Would I put my child in this place?" It's hard to overcome a bad first impression.

You are looking for child care. Beyond the cost, what else are you looking for? What can you see in a snap shot view of a day care home? Use your senses as you go through the home. This will help you make a decision. Pay attention to your first impression. It's like the first 15 seconds on a blind date. It's hard to overcome a bad first impression.

Way Up to the House

- What is the condition of the home?
- Is there a house number visible?
- Are there steps and railings? What is the condition of them?
- Is there lawn care or snow removal?
- Is there water- lake, stream, pool accessible? How are children kept safely away?
- Are there broken toys/ equipment?
- Are there junk cars and other hazards?
- Is there fast food clutter on the lawn?
- Are there pet messes on the lawn?
- Is there a safe outdoor play area?

Inside the Door

- Are odors present?
- Is the provider dressed? Professional appearance?
- Children-where are they and what are they doing?
- What is the general cleanliness of the home?
- Are there family pets? What is their demeanor towards children? Adults?
- Are the rooms well lighted?

- Is there sufficient heating and cooling?
- What are the emergency plans?
- Are there gates on the bottom or top of stairs?

Bathroom

- Is the toilet-functioning, clean?
- Are potty chairs-clean?
- Are medications inaccessible to children?
- Are cleaning supplies inaccessible?
- Are cosmetics, hairspray, perfume inaccessible?
- Are curling irons, hair dryers inaccessible?
- Is the pet litter box inaccessible?



Kitchen

- What is the general cleanliness?
- Are there dirty dishes in sink?
- Is there food on floor?
- Is food left unrefrigerated?
- Is the trash uncovered or overflowing?
- Are knives and other sharp tools inaccessible?
- Are cleaning supplies inaccessible?
- Are plastic bags inaccessible?
- Are matches, lighters inaccessible?
- Is alcohol inaccessible?
- Are pet food dishes inaccessible?
- Is the barbecue grill lighter inaccessible?
- Are high chairs clean and safe?
- Are medications properly stored?
- Is the kitchen insect and rodent free?

Diaper Area

- Where are diapers changed?
- Is the area clean and sanitized and safe?
- Where are dirty diapers disposed of?
- Does the caregiver wash hands after diapering?
- Where is the sink located?

Basement

- Will it be used for care?

- Is there a second exit?
- Is the temperature comfortable?
- Is there a safe staircase? Is it lighted?
- Does the basement have ample light?
- Is there a lot of unsorted debris?
- Is the furnace or hot water heater inaccessible?
- Are workshop tools inaccessible?
- Is the liquor cabinet inaccessible to children?
- Is exercise equipment inaccessible?
- Is the basement floor dry?

Bedrooms

- What is the general cleanliness?
- Are medications inaccessible to children?
- Are cosmetics inaccessible to children?
- Are there windows that open?
- Are plants inaccessible or non-poisonous?
- Are firearms and other weapons inaccessible?
- Is the crib a safe, newer model?
- Where will the children sleep?
- Are adult videos inaccessible?
- Are dry cleaning plastic bags inaccessible?
- Are outlets covered?

Toys and Equipment

- Are the toys appropriate for the ages of children in care?
- Are they safe for the children?
- Are toys unsafe for younger children made inaccessible?
- Are toys in good condition?
- Where are toys stored? If in a toy box, does it have hinges?
- Is equipment sturdy?

Living Room

- What is the general cleanliness?
- Is the kitchen child proof?
- What is the condition of the furniture?
- Are sharp edges on furniture protected?
- Are plants inaccessible or non-poisonous?
- Are outlets covered?
- Are there knick knacks accessible to children? How does the provider react to them being handled by children?
- Is there a wood burning stove or fireplace? Are they inaccessible to the children?

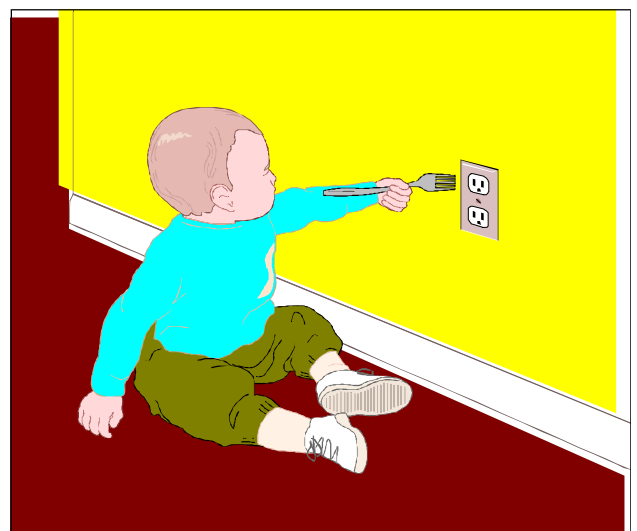
- Is there protection from falls against the hearth?
- Is the TV on? What is playing? How long is it kept on during the day?
- Are cigarettes, matches, lighters inaccessible?
- Are there gates on the bottom or top of stairs?

Garage

- Is there a lock on the freezer door?
- Where is the gasoline, kerosene, charcoal lighter stored?
- Are tools inaccessible?
- Are returnable cans and bottles inaccessible?
- Are lawn and garden equipment made inaccessible?
- Are garden tools and poisons inaccessible?
- Are bug sprays inaccessible?
- Are pool chemicals inaccessible to children?
- Are antifreeze and other auto related materials inaccessible?

Of course, like a blind date, the physical aspects are what is first noticed. If the first impression is bad, no one will ever know you are the best caregiver.

As the parent, if you are satisfied with the safety of the home, then you have taken the beginning step. Ahead will be determining if you and the caregiver share compatible ideas about the care of your child.



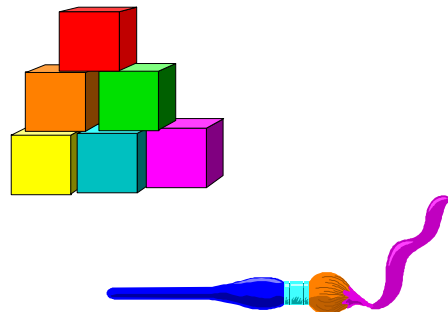
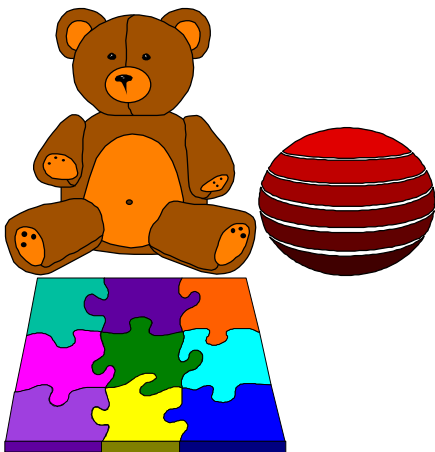
SELECTING CHILD CARE

Editorial Committee

You have gone to the facility and have a first hand impression of the surroundings. That was step one in the selection process. Now there are other things to think about in determining if this is the best placement for your child (ren).

Below are listed some considerations for parents when choosing a child care setting:

- ◇ Are the caregivers warm, accepting and responsive to the children?
- ◇ Are caregivers concerned about meeting your child's individual needs?
- ◇ Do caregivers make you feel welcome and talk to you about your child?
- ◇ Are caregivers open to your questions and concerns?
- ◇ How long has the caregiver worked with children?
- ◇ Does the caregiver have a positive attitude with children?
- ◇ Is the program adequately staffed?
- ◇ Is the caregiver trained in CPR and First Aid?
- ◇ Is there adequate indoor and outdoor space? Adequate space for resting?
- ◇ What will your child be doing during a typical day?
- ◇ Will your child play both indoors and outdoors every day?
- ◇ Is there a large choice of toys and equipment for the child to encourage active, quiet and creative play?
- ◇ What is the policy toward watching television?
- ◇ What is the policy concerning discipline? Is it consistent with your ideas?
- ◇ Will your child be free to express his feelings?
- ◇ What snacks or meals are provided? Are they nutritious?
- ◇ Do the other children seem to be relaxed, happy and playing cooperatively?



TRY IT, YOU'LL LIKE IT
Sandy Settergren, Judy Gaspar
Licensing Consultants
Washtenaw and Kalamazoo Counties

Two methods of written communication with parents are a contract and a handbook. It is best to use both, but you should use at least one of them.

The contract spells out the legal obligations of both parties, the parent and the provider. A handbook is usually longer and lists policies, procedures and expectations.

A beginning contract should include:

<u>RESPONSIBILITIES OF PROVIDER</u>	<u>RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS</u>
Hours	Compliance with agreed upon hours
Fees	Payment of fees
Provision of meals	Provision of food as agreed
Special infant requirements	Provision of infant food and/or
Infants- food, equipment (baby seat, crib, car seat), diapers	equipment as agreed
Safe environment	Notification of child's absence or lateness
Compliance with state requirements	Withdrawal notice
Opportunity to rest	
Discipline policy	
Medication administration policy	
Withdrawal policy	

Each party should sign and date the contract and receive her own copy. A contract is a necessary part of doing business. It does not prevent anyone from providing warm, personal care. It is a foundation for that care. A relationship that is too casual can prevent you from effectively handling difficult child care issues.

KEEPING COMPLAINTS TO A BARE MINIMUM

Judy Levine, Area Manager
Division of Child Day Care Licensing

You've opened a child care business. The very nature of establishing a business brings with it the potential for complaints. While you may never be able to completely avoid them, there are some steps you can take that will reduce the likelihood they will occur. Keep in mind that open communication is the key. If parents feel they can't go to you, they will go to licensing, or worse yet, to the outside community.

- **Have clearly written expectations for you and the parents before you open your doors.** A contract or parent handbook, or both, which describes your policies, procedures, and parent responsibilities establishes the rules under which you operate. If you are already in business and do not have these tools, it is never too late to put them together. Once established, contracts and parent handbooks can be modified as events occur which were not considered earlier.
- **Interview the parents and determine if they are in agreement with your operation.** It is important that there be a good fit between you and the parents. Give a trial period of a minimum of two weeks, with no strings attached, to see if there is a good match. There is nothing wrong with you or the child if there is not.
- **Include a statement in your contract or handbook about the termination of the relationship by either party.** Don't try to be all things to all people by keeping a child longer than is healthy for either of you.
- **Greet the parents and children at the door when they arrive for the beginning of the day.** At the end of the day, tell the parents one good thing their child did. Avoid meeting them with a list of their child's sins.
- **Have a parent/provider conference following the trial period to let parents know how their child is doing and to answer any questions.** Then have regularly scheduled conferences throughout the year, not just when there is a problem.
- **Use good listening skills. Listen, then listen again when parents express a concern or if something goes wrong.** Be open to criticism even if you think you are right. Let parents feel that they can come to you with concerns. Consider that you might just need to make an adjustment to your program.
- **Be tactful when discussing concerns about a child with his parents.** Refrain from talking about the child in front of other children or parents. Remember information about each child is confidential.
- **Deal with parent's concerns the first time they are expressed.** Don't wait until the third time they have told you. By that time, they are sure you have not been listening to them and are going to go to the outside with their concerns, generally to licensing.
- **Handle problems with parents immediately and in private.** If it is a violation of your contract, put it in writing and address with the parents their responsibility to follow the agreement.
- **Follow your rules, as you have outlined them in your contract/parent handbook, and the licensing rules.** Most complaints occur when you bend the rules or do not follow them at all. Oftentimes, they occur when there is a problem about money.
- **Call your licensing consultant, if you anticipate an irate parent may contact her.** In this way, the consultant will have your side of the story should a complaint be received.
- **Be respectful of and keep peace with your neighbors.** Make sure that you, the children and their parents, respect your neighbors' property and possessions. Keep noise levels under control.
- **Step back and look at your facility through the eyes of a consumer.** Would you want to have a child here?

Finally, remember the golden rule. Treat parents and children with the same respect as you would want them to show you.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

**Sharon Schleicher
Administrative Assistant
Division of Child Day Care Licensing**

It is only with parents, providers, the local community and the Division of Child Day Care Licensing working together that good care for children can be achieved. Parents need information in order to make good choices about child care. It is important that everyone involved in providing protection for children encourage parents to gather accurate and thorough information about the day care facilities they plan to use.

One of the ways in which parents can access information about child care centers and day care homes is by requesting information through Michigan's Freedom of Information Act passed by the Michigan Legislature in 1976. The purpose of this law, known as Act 442 of 1976, is to allow persons access to certain public records such as licensing reports written by the Division of Child Day Care Licensing. Act 442 separates public records into 2 classes: (1) those which are exempt from disclosure or release and (2) all others, which shall be released or disclosed. It also exempts information of a personal nature where public disclosure would be a violation of an individual's privacy such as medical records and social security numbers.

The Division of Child Day Care Licensing regularly receives requests from persons asking for information about certain day care facilities. Usually persons are researching what licensed/registered facilities are in their area or what has been the licensing history of a facility where they wish to enroll their own child(ren). Other calls may be from someone who has been involved in a licensing investigation and is interested in the outcome of the investigation. Generally, the most requested records include: lists of regulated care facilities, licensing inspection reports, reports and special investigation i.e., complaint reports. Sometimes licensees may disagree with the results of an investigation. In that case, she may write her comments/rebuttal and this

will be included as part of the licensees' record and will be released along with that record.

Persons requesting records related to child day care can write to the Division of Child Day Care Licensing at 7109 W. Saginaw 2nd Floor, P.O. Box 30650, Lansing, Michigan 48909-8150. They will need to identify the name and address of the facility, type of facility, e.g., day care center or home, and the specific documents they want.

FOOD PROGRAM CHANGES

The food program will be changing for family and group home care effective July, 1997. Do you know and understand how this is going to affect you? If you have questions, call your food program representative.

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*Please send articles for consideration in
future issues to:
Better Homes and Centers
Division of Child Day Care Licensing
1301 Sunset, P.O. Box 30272
Lansing, Michigan 48909*

MAKE CLEAR YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CHILD AND HIS FAMILY

Do not let yourself replace the child's parents. Support the relationship between him and his parents, and make very clear to them that your role is supportive.

For instance, begin a child's toilet training only when his parents think he is ready. And then, agree with them on the methods to be used so that each can support the efforts of the other. You may suggest another approach but abide by the parent's decision.

Show concern for each child's welfare by saying and doing that which is in the best interest of the child and of the whole group.

Take nothing out on the child. It isn't his fault if you are tired or his parents forgot his extra clothing.

Take time to talk about each child with his parents, but always discuss difficulties and differences of opinion when the child can't hear. Respect confidences shared, including the child's.

There are some things you should regularly discuss with the parents. Paint a verbal picture wherever possible of:

- How the child's eating and sleeping habits are changing.
- How he feels about new things.
- What he likes the most.
- What his current interests are.
- How creative he is.
- How he related to the others and you.
- How much your husband enjoys him.

Discourage discussing anything not relevant to the child. You cannot become involved in family

squabbles but if parents ask for assistance, you can suggest where they can get help.

Sometimes parents want to do special things for you because they appreciate you. Encourage them to show how they feel by doing things for the children in your care rather than for you personally.

Remember that you are running a business. Therefore be firm about such things as a child's being picked up promptly. Also be consistent - apply your policies the same way for everyone.

You are caring for your own family as well as for other people's children. Make sure the day care children and their parents understand that you have your own family to care for.

Reprinted from *When You Care for Children*. DSS Pub 102.



HAPPILY EVER AFTER?...NOT ALWAYS

**Carole Grates, Area Manager
Division of Child Day Care Licensing**

*"My child is not learning anything in your program.
I think you should change what you are doing here."*

What a challenge to a child care provider or early childhood teacher. And this is only one of many challenges parents may throw at you in your career. Often what happens is a farewell ceremony that is anything but happy and often is downright painful.

What causes painful good-byes? They can happen over how you handle behavior problems, your policies, payment issues, and even suggestions that there may be concerns about a child. But what really causes these disagreements? Often the root cause is lack of communication between you and the parent from the very beginning of your relationship.

Is this lack of communication always your fault? No! But it helps to look at how you can avoid the situation with some upfront planning.

The first thing you should do, if you have not already, is put together a parent handbook that clearly explains your policies as well as your expectations of the parents. Do not rely on the parent to read it! Make it a practice to have an initial interview where you carefully review each policy. Let the parent ask questions to clarify what you expect. This is the time to identify any major areas of disagreement. Don't be afraid to suggest that this may not be the best place for this family if you have concerns. It may save you a lot of grief in the future.

Another way to avoid misunderstandings, especially about your daily program, is to insist that the parent spend some time visiting before enrolling the child. Explain what your goals are for children and how you achieve them through activities that allow for child choice and child involvement. Help the parent to see what children are learning by pointing out what is happening in any activity you may have going on during the visit. If the parent brings up inappropriate expectations, such as wanting her three year old to learn to read, take time to clarify your position on this. Again, it is better to suggest now that your program may not meet the expectations of this parent than to have a battle later.

Handling children's misbehavior can bring about some of the most bitter misunderstandings between you and the parent. The best way to avoid this is to let the parent know what behaviors are not acceptable and how you handle situations when children step outside your limits. When a child does misbehave, talk to the parent immediately, don't let your anger grow. Ask the parent to problem solve with you on the best way to deal with the problem. Come to an agreement on how you will both react if it occurs again. A good rule a child care provider told a parent once is, "If you don't believe everything your child says about child care, I won't believe everything he says about home!" In other words, let's check with each other first and be consistent in our messages to the child.

One of the best ways to avoid problems is to make sure you see the parent each day either at the beginning or at the end. This is the time to talk about little concerns before they become big ones. Be a good listener, not a defensive one. If there is a problem, the parent may have a legitimate gripe and some good suggestions on how you can improve your business.

All this sounds great, but when you are in the heat of the situation it never seems easy. First, avoid becoming defensive. The parent may be right. When you approach the problem with this attitude, you are more likely to listen. Listening also has another benefit. Sometimes what the parent says is the problem, is not really the issue. Repeat back to the parent what you thought you heard and check that you are both on the same subject. These tactics can diffuse the situation and help you to do some meaningful problem-solving. And remember, don't air your dirty linen in front of the children or staff. Ask the parent to go to a private area where you both can talk freely.

Learn from any parent encounter. You may be surprised to learn there is a better way of doing business. If that is your conclusion, thank the parent. Most importantly, painful encounters with parents show you where you are not communicating the best you can. After you resolve the issue, think how you can avoid the same problem with future parents. You might even do as one home provider does and change your policy to meet the situation. She says it keeps her busy but each situation makes her business more successful and makes her a better provider of care to both the children and the parents.

Happily ever after? Not always, but planning ahead and learning from your mistakes can lead you to more successful encounters with parents that may have happy endings.

JUST SAY NO!

Sandy Settergren, Licensing Consultant
Livingston/Washtenaw Counties

NO! It's a perfectly good word. Why do some child care providers find it so difficult to use?

It's ten o'clock at night. Your friend/ family member/ day care parent/ neighbor calls and tells you that her mother is scheduled for emergency surgery in the morning and she needs you to care for her two children. You are a regulated child care provider authorized to care for a specific number of children at one time. You will be at capacity the next morning and do not have room for more. What can you do to solve this terrible problem that you have? **Just say no!**

First of all, this is not your problem! It is the caller's problem. The arrival of your day care license/certificate does not confer upon you an immediate responsibility to solve the child care problems of your entire community, or even of your best friend.

You can be sensitive, you can be caring and you can make suggestions, but you may not violate the licensing laws and rules. You can also anticipate that such a situation might arise and have plans to handle it. Are some of your day care parents' schedules flexible enough to accommodate a change in their child care plans for tomorrow? Can you suggest that the caller try to reach a friend or neighbor? Do you know another child care provider who is licensed and prepared to provide drop-in care? If your answer to these questions is no, then you must **just say no!**

Frequently it has been my experience that both accidents and complaints happen when child care facilities have violated either licensing rules or the facility's own rules. When you are asked to violate licensing rules or your own, **just say no!**

"But who will care for these children if I don't?" Now there is a question which has put more child care providers and day care children in jeopardy than anyone can imagine. It is not your problem! You have a responsibility to the children and parents with whom you have contracted to provide child care. You have a responsibility to the State of Michigan and to yourself to provide only the care you are authorized to provide and to follow all the rules while doing it.

It's not that I don't both recognize and appreciate your loving and caring nature that got you into the day care business in the first place. I admire that nurturing nature that you have. Don't abuse and destroy it by taking on responsibilities which are not yours. **Just say no!**

You don't solve people's problems by violating rules and putting both the children and yourself in jeopardy. If you don't follow the rules and lose your license, it won't matter how caring you are. You won't be caring for anybody.

Just say no! It's a good word. Learn to use it in all the right places.



MONTH OF THE YOUNG CHILD™

Barb Monroe, MOYC Chairperson

You are invited to join in a month-long celebration highlighting the needs and rights of young children and their families. The month of April is designated the Month of the Young Child (MOYC). The goal of the Month of the Young Child is to increase public and private awareness of children's issues. Small voices are hard to hear, but when our many voices join together, on behalf of children, we can make a difference!

The Michigan Association for the Education of Young Children coordinates a statewide public awareness campaign, working in partnership with a coalition of Michigan public and private agencies, organizations and corporations. Across the state, children's advocates promote and implement MOYC activities. The key idea for the Month of the Young Child is to celebrate children.

The Month of the Young Child Steering Committee is encouraging a variety of activities and events that will help promote the statewide celebration starting at the grass roots. Each week in April will focus on specific important issues and area that effect children.

The focus weeks for MOYC 1997 are:

Week 1- Celebrating Community Partnerships

Week 2- Promoting Healthy Children and Families

Week 3- Recognizing Early Childhood Professionals

Week 4- Advocating on Behalf of Children and Families

There are also additional ways to celebrate during the month of April.

✿ **Early Childhood Professional Recognition Week-April 13-19.** This is a time dedicated to thanking early childhood professionals for their dedication to the education and welfare of children. Please take time to thank those who work on behalf of children and families.

✿ **YMCA National Healthy Kids Day-April 12,** occurs during the focus week promoting healthy children and families. In many communities, YMCAs will sponsor activities and provide information about health issues.

✿ **Doll Campaign.** Make a paper doll, complete it with a child's true story and display it in your businesses and throughout your communities, or send

it to a legislator or community leader. Life-size dressed and decorated cardboard dolls with stories will be distributed to local officials in April. Together we can make this a "Dolls Across Michigan" campaign.

✿ **The Scrapbook Project** shows selected public officials that high quality children's programs exist in their communities. The scrapbooks, through photographs, written commentary and children's artworks, display examples of high quality early childhood education and care.

Both the **Doll and Scrapbook projects** can be used at the local levels to heighten awareness of governing boards, school boards, businesses and service organizations.

◇ **Purple Ribbons will be seen everywhere!** Wear or display a purple ribbon to show commitment to and support of Michigan's children.

◇ **Child Care Job Shadow Day**-various days in April. Community leaders "work" in child care centers or with home providers which allows them to see the complexities and the skills involved in the child care profession.

◇ **Worthy Wage Day.** Thursday May 1,1997 is the national public awareness event of the Worthy Wage Campaign which is a grassroots effort to increase public awareness of the necessity to improve wages, benefits, training and working conditions for child care personnel.

◇ **Children's Artwork Displays.** Paint your community with children's art to help celebrate the MOYC.

There is no time like today to begin thinking of ways you too can join this celebration. Collaborate with early childhood professionals to create a unified show of support for our most valuable asset, our children.

Celebrate children!

For more information about MOYC, Contact:

Month of the Young Child

Michigan Association for the Education of Young Children

4572 S. Hagadorn Road, Suite 1D

East Lansing, Michigan 48823

1-800-336-6424 or 517-336-9700

Month of the Young Child and MOYC are registered service marks of the Michigan Association for the Education of Young Children.

Child Care Job Shadow Day and Worthy Wage Day are programs of the National Center for the Early Childhood Workforce.

CHILDREN'S TRUST FUND: INCOME TAX CHECK-OFF

Children are remarkable because they believe just about anything adults tell them. They believe us because they trust us. Children need to trust adults because they can't live without us. But the sad fact is that too many adults abuse and neglect the children in their care...betraying their trust. That is why the Children's Trust Fund (CTF) is again asking Michigan citizens to fight child abuse by **"Putting Your Money Where Your Heart Is."** The Division of Child Day Care Licensing is pleased to help CTF get the word out.

Research has proven the most effective way to stop child abuse is to prevent it from happening. The Michigan Children's Trust Fund is an independent, non-profit agency established in 1982 to prevent child abuse and neglect. CTF promotes the health, safety and welfare of children through public education and the funding of a network of community-based prevention programs and services. CTF funded programs help eliminate the ignorance and isolation that is often the root of abusive parenting or caretaking. Many of these programs teach how to positively handle the challenges of child-rearing, understand children's developmental stages, develop realistic expectations, and provide respite and support to families.

In the last 14 years, the generous donations of Michigan citizens have allowed the CTF to fund over 500 direct service programs in local communities and serve over 500,000 families and 2.5 million children. Currently, private donations and grants support over 50 direct service programs and local Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Councils in 79 counties across the state.

Prevention is the only effective way, both in human and monetary terms, by which to address this issue or any other societal and public health concern. Many Michiganders understand this and the correlation between a child who is abused and the increased costs to taxpayers in terms of foster care, protective services, special education, medical/mental health services, unemployment, incarceration, and drug or alcohol abuse.

There is an easy way to become a "Prevention Partner" with CTF. Every year, your Michigan income tax form offers you the opportunity to fight child abuse and neglect by donating to the Children's Trust Fund. Simply by checking the CTF box on line 27 of your Michigan state income tax form or writing in the amount of your gift, families can donate part of their tax refund to the Children's Trust Fund. Your gift will be tax-deductible in the following year. CTF calls this "Putting Your Money Where Your Heart Is"!

But it is more than that. It's putting your money toward the one thing that can stop the cycle of child abuse and neglect...**Prevention.**



BEST WISHES, NORA
Judy Gaspar Licensing Consultant
Kalamzoo County

Nora Markle retired after providing day care in her home in Allegan County for 30 years. She had operated as a Family Day Care Home and as a Group Day Care Home and had been assisted by a neighbor and by relatives.

INTERVIEWER

NORA

How do you feel about closing your day care?

Not sorry. Not a bit sorry... I've enjoyed every minute of it.

What will you do when you retire?

Put the Christmas tree in that back room (now the children's play room). I've always wanted a Christmas tree in that back room. One in the front room and one in the back room.

How have children changed over the years?

Little children run the show today. Back then, kids listened better than they do today...Yesterday a 3 year old told me "I just won't come back any more" after I had asked her to put on her clothes.

How many children have you cared for over the years?

I wish I had kept track...I'd start with one (child) and then they'd have two or three. I stayed with the same family... I've had the children of every Chief of Police in town... You can't walk down the street but that I see someone I've had (in care).... they come back and see me...At Christmas I get a card from the mother who moved to Alabama and from the Chief of Police that moved to Chicago.

How did these parents find you for day care?

All my children are from referrals. I'd rather have referrals... one mother to another.

What may have contributed to your success?

I always tried to treat kids like I would my own...I only closed one week in 30 years when Sherry (her daughter) got married... We always took one trip a year on Labor Day Weekend. After work on Friday we'd drive down to see my sister and drive back on Mondays to start again on Tuesday. I never took the day before (a holiday), I just took the holiday.

How have you kept children safe here?

All those years I never went to the Emergency Room (with a day care child)...I never took my kids in a car...I have stricter rules than some. I never let them, little or big, outside alone. My kids don't run the

(One boy is waking up from his nap and is rolling around)

Will you miss all this?

neighborhood... I don't let them eat regular hot dogs. I cut them little and skin them. No carrots or pickles either...I won't let them bring anything with a string on and play with it. I don't let them play in here by the fireplace) because anything will mend but their head.

Do you have to go to the bathroom? Go on and go to the bathroom... (aside) When you've been in this long, you know when they have to go.

I think I'm glad they're leaving. I'm sure I'll be lonesome.

Thank you for your years of service to the children, to the families, and to the community.

MOVING ON
Mary Lynn Channer
Former Group Day Care Provider
Waldorf Kindercottage
Monroe County

After months of contemplation, I have decided to discontinue day care in my home to work, instead, artistically with children and parents together one or two days a week at the Kindercottage. I will also be giving music lessons to Waldorf home schoolers in the Ann Arbor area one day a week.

It saddens me that there is such a great need for the care of young children that is not being fulfilled in an adequate way. I am sorry, because of my health problems and my frustration over the present attitude towards day care, that I am no longer able to fill this need. So many parents are uninformed about what is really healthy for children. Often they are fearful that their children will not be ready for kindergarten or first grade if they haven't already learned their letters or numbers. They are not aware that children who have experienced creative play and artistic activities with plenty of movement and love of nature have the best training for thinking. This training brings a more balanced and imaginative outlook on life in later years. Also, the hurried life style that we all must battle in one way or another causes parents to want what is most convenient and costs the least. Parents are willing to pay \$20 an hour to have their house cleaned but only \$2 for someone to care for their child. Yet, everyone knows (at least to some degree) which task is more important and demanding.

Soon after my foot problem began, a desperate mother called me needing care for her child. She had been taking her child to a day care home. After numerous occasions, where she found other children alone in front of the TV downstairs and had to waken the caregiver sleeping upstairs, she removed the child. Too many children are being cared for by a television set rather than a warm human being. Some of these will someday be supported by public funds to sit in a correctional facility and watch TV and participate in other activities that harden them further. On occasion, prisoners who have experienced singing and other artistic activities over a period of time have been found not to offend again. Amazing results have been achieved by Waldorf methods with young gang leaders in California who have learned to play Mozart on recorders with one another. People need to penetrate each other's lives and if they don't do it through conversation and the arts, they will do it with rape, knives and guns.

RESOURCES: COMMUNICATION

“Asian Parents as Partners,” Fong Yun Lee, Young Children, NAEYC March 1995.

“Effective Techniques for Involving Difficult Parents,” Gloria Boutte, Dannie Keepler, Violet Tyler and Brenda Terry, Young Children, NAEYC March, 1995.

“Face-to Face Communication: Understanding and Strengthening the Partnership,” Margie Carter, Child Care Information Exchange, March 1988.

Getting Men Involved: Strategies for Early Childhood Programs, **James Levine, PhD., Dennis T. Murphy, PhD., And Sherrill Wilson, PhD., Redleaf Press, 1-800-423-8309.**

Juggling A Job and Johnny, **Publication # 798, Family Independence Agency.**

Making Home Based Child Care Work for You, **Holly McDonough-Abunassar, Child Care, 1995. (Available for loan from your licensing consultant).**

“Parents and Teacher/Caregivers: Sources of Tension, Sources of Support,” Ellen Galinsky, Young Children, NAEYC March 1988.

Parent’s Guide to Early Childhood Education, **Diane Trister Dodge and Joanna Phinney, Redleaf Press.**

Separation: Strategies for Helping Two to Four Year Olds, **Kathe Jarvis, Editor, NAEYC. 1984**

Talking With Families About Divorce, **Fred Rodgers, Family Communications, Inc., 1981**

“Unhappy Endings,” Nancy Jacobs, Young Children, March, 1992.